

WASHINGTON, D.C. --- Today, the Railroad Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure committee passed two bills that will make Oregon eligible for new rail funds. The two bills are H.R. 2950, the Railroad Infrastructure Development and Expansion Act for the 21st Century; and H.R. 4545, the Amtrak Reauthorization Act of 2002. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) voted for both bills and worked behind the scenes to ensure that language favorable to Oregon was included in today's markup.

Blumenauer was successful in adding language that gives Oregon an advantage over other states in accessing rail funding. This language includes the following:

- Clarification that the term "Interstate Compact" also includes "Interstate Agreements." This is important because it must be very clear that states like Oregon and Washington (and the 14 other states in the same situation) are eligible for the new funding tools provided by the bill.

- Preference given by the Secretary of Transportation when designating bonds for those projects where the environmental work has been completed and funds are ready to be obligated, and for those projects that have had or there is proposed state and local financial commitment. Oregon fits these criteria because state, local and private groups have already invested more than \$50 million to bring high speed rail to the state. This language will help increase Oregon's chances of receiving these bonds should the state apply.